DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 416 EA 022 080

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TITLE Specific Indicators of Accountability in School District Organizations: Assessment, Profiling, Restructuring, and Redeployment of Resources.
INSTITUTION Northern Arizona Univ., Flagstaff. Center for Excellence in Education.
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Accountability; *Educational Assessment; Educational Environment; Educational Finance; Effective Schools Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; Faculty Development; Long Range Planning; Motivation; Program Evaluation; Resource Allocation; School Districts; School Effectiveness; *School Readiness; *School Restructuring

ABSTRACT

Educational change depends on the development of total school system readiness. An analysis of the school evaluation process is the purpose of this report. Essential steps to determine school readiness for restructuring include the assessment, profiling, and integration of interrelated system components, which include focus and support factors. Recommendations for achieving system readiness include accurate assessment of organizational components and long-range systematic planning. (LMI)

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SPECIFIC INDICATORS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS:

Assessment, Profiling, Restructuring & Redeployment of Resources

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Assessment, Profiling, Restructuring & Redeployment of Resources for Developing Educational Equity & System Readiness in School District Organizations

> To become effective organizations which have the greatest impact on positive teacher development and student achievement, districts must recognize the necessity of *developing total school system readiness.*

- Districts are extremely unequal (*between school systems*) in their organizational capabilities and resources to impact student learning potentials.

- Organizational components (*within school systems*) exhibit varying capabilities and levels of resources to impact school goals. One inappropriately functioning component or negative factor can anchor and drag the others down or keep them from attaining the institutional goals.

Assessing and Profiling Organizational Readiness for Educational Accountability

> *Accountability* for effective school operations is determined through assessing, profiling and improving the total organization and its components which impact school goals.

* The first step toward development of organizational readiness is to determine how each of the interrelated components of the school system is integrated and targeted on school goals. Each support and focus factor must be operating in a healthy way and functioning at a level which will support the total organization and reason for its existence.

* Before major change and restructuring can successfully be accomplished (the planning phase), the total school system and curricular programs must be *evaluated*, resulting in informed decisions for *redeployment of resources.* Objective and valid information is necessary to achieve readiness levels which can successfully allow for implementation of complex and comprehensive reform programs.

* Effective *restructuring* of school districts is accomplished through *assessment, profiling* and *integration* of all interrelated components. Each support and focus factor which shows weaknesses should be promptly corrected through application of *improvement models* which meet local needs.

Essential Interrelated Characteristics of Effective Schools:

Focus Factors

> All internal and external organizational factors must be primarily focused on, and be held accountable for, student growth and learning. The focal point of student achievement depends on adequate support and development of the following factors:

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (PRODUCTION & OUTCOMES)

* Students are unequal in maturation, motivation and past experience. For student development, it is necessary to understand the *principles of human growth and learning*, such as the following: (1) students have differing social, emotional and academic readiness levels; (2) learning proceeds at different rates; (3) growth and learning is a sequential, continuous and orderly process; (4) development is cumulative and begins from where past experience and learning have left off.

  - Teachers should *demonstrate their accountability for their own students' achievement* by learning how to pre- & post-test and assess gain scores

  - School- & district-wide emphasis on *defining desired outcomes in traditionally "hard-to-quantify" areas*, such as music, art & creative writing

  - Understanding & attention to the *social & emotional development of students*, as being *equally important to their cognitive/intellectual growth*

  - Explicit *inclusion of "educational specialists"* (e.g., school counselors & librarians) within the overall staff definition of professionals who significantly impact student learning on the cognitive, social & emotional levels

CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION/MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING

* A valid and reliable *curriculum* is required in order to meet state and local objectives for learning and on which to assess student progress.

  Curriculum
  - *Development of a valid curriculum* which has been aligned specifically with local needs, objectives & conditions

- Teacher & administrator awareness of the importance of such a sound overall curriculum development

- *Ongoing review & revision* of curriculum

- *Direct input from involved outside parties* such as parents & university faculty in preceding activities (curriculum development, alignment & review)

* Adequate *instructional materials, methodology and technology* is required to assist students in learning curricular content.

Instruction

- Focus on obtaining and/or developing top-quality classroom materials & instructional strategies geared to local needs, objectives & conditions

- *Seeking, recognizing & rewarding individual creativity, initiative & input* into development of such locally appropriate materials & methods

* For *accountability in the measurement and assessment of student progress*, it is necessary to identify specific amounts of pre- and post-gains. Teachers must be aware of the different levels at which students began their learning process, how far they have advanced and what specific content is next in the curricular/developmental sequence.

Measurement of Student Learning

- School & district *efforts to develop own norms* for reliably linking teacher performance to student achievement

- *Developing a variety of local, state & national tests & assessment procedures* in all subject areas

TEACHER SKILL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

* Teachers must have the support of adequate *inservice programs* and incentives for development of classroom teaching skills, and provision of leadership opportunities focused on the instructional program.

Teacher Skills Development

- Providing teachers with an *increased variety & scope of task assignments* (e.g., involvement in curriculum development & revision), along with explicitly recognizing the additional time required for such duties

- Reviewing teacher-certification requirements to *determine the adequacy for licensure* of top-quality instructional professionals

- Offering "educational specialists" the same opportunities for job enlargement/enrichment as those awarded to other teachers

- Providing *year-round inservice opportunities* with respect to such aspects of ongoing teacher skills enhancement as planning, instruction and principles of human growth & development

Teacher Leadership

- Providing opportunities to teachers for mentoring, peer coaching & similar activities, along with explicit recognition of the extended time requirements necessitated by such task assignments

- Directly incorporating *a greater variety & scope of such opportunities for development of teacher leaders,"* as part of districts' progression through the three tiers of Career Ladder program participation

ADMINISTRATOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

* Administrators must have the support of adequate *leadership development* and incentive programs.

Administrator Skills Development

- *Provision of adequate inservice & other necessary background information to administrators* about external teacher-incentive programs such as Career Ladders, before such programs are actually implemented

Administrator Leadership

- Requirement of the majority of administrative, as well as teacher, support by confidential ballot, prior to adoption of external reform programs, i.e., teacher-incentive programs such as Career Ladders

- *Opportunities for direct administrator involvement & input* with respect to such key day-to-day issues of program implementation as evaluation of Career Ladder teachers and development of procedures to assess student achievement

Essential Interrelated Characteristics of Effective Schools:

Support Factors

TEACHER & ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION

* Evaluation of teacher and administrator performance requires *valid and reliable criteria* which fairly and objectively differentiate skills and leadership related to enhancing the school's instructional program and impacting student learning.

  - *Ongoing development, periodic review & revision* as necessary of locally appropriate evaluation processes and procedures

  - Opportunities for *direct input from teachers & administrators into these local evaluation systems*

  - Incorporation of the latest available quantitative & qualitative (multi-method) methodologic technology in order to strengthen the reliability & internal validity of such locally based evaluation systems

MOTIVATION: EXTRINSIC & INTRINSIC

* Teachers are extrinsically motivated if they receive *adequate compensation* to focus their energies on the professional duties involved in the teaching/learning process. In addition, they need to be recognized for their level of teaching skills and leadership based on a fair and objective evaluation system. They are intrinsically motivated through being able to work in a *cooperative and supportive environment* which allows for individuality, trust and respect, creativity, skill development and input and leadership in improving the learning environment.

  Motivation: Extrinsic

  - Ensuring that, whatever the total pool of available funds for current disbursement to Career Ladder program participants, the *key feature to consider* is that *there must be in place an evaluation system which is perceived as fair* by the participants & on which such monetary reward distribution is based

  - Considering compensation for attendance at workshops & other teacher-improvement activities

  - Staying alert to *possible interpersonal & climate problems* which may arise as a result of automatically starting out participants at the highest salary/bonus levels

Motivation: Intrinsic

- Recognizing *intrinsic satisfaction* perceived by teachers with respect to *"increased professionalism,"* by offering ample opportunities for mentoring, peer coaching & other teacher-leadership activities noted earlier

- Similarly, *recognizing teachers' desire for skills development* (unanimously documented in five years of research on all school districts involved in the Career Ladder pilot-test in Arizona) by increased provision of inservice & other professional-development activities noted earlier

LOCAL FINANCE & FUNDING (SALARY SCHEDULE)

* **Local financial commitment should be adequate for recruiting and maintaining a highly qualified and motivated teaching staff. Salary schedules should reflect a differentiation of staff based on performance. However, increments which are too large can result in financial hardships or potential morale problems due to competitiveness and jealousies among teachers.**

  - Ensuring *adequate funding* being *available for* such *necessary "start-up" activities* as establishment of equitable evaluation system & local district research & development support activities, as opposed to allocating entire designated sums for increased teacher salaries

  - Continuing to monitor & ensure a truly *"performance-based" approach to salary allocation*

  - Maintaining participants' expressed desire for the separateness of Career Ladders compensation from the traditional salary schedule in formulating projected funding budgets

  - Sincere concern for fulfilling responsibility of *"financial stewardship"* (e.g., demonstrating tangible benefits, with respect to increased student achievement & teacher accountability, in exchange for public dollars received)

DISTRICT RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (PROGRAM EVALUATION)

* **Districts must establish a locally based research and development operation which assists in planning, studying and documenting progress demonstrating accountability for changing and improving all of the essential interrelated support and focus elements within the organization which impact student learning. A major function of the R & D unit is to assist in establishing internally, or securing from**

outside sources, the necessary technical and technological support to assess and improve district developmental needs.

- *Developing own local site-based research & development division* to monitor program implementation & adjust objectives/outcomes to local conditions

- Encouraging *"objective 3rd-party" input/involvement* in consulting with districts to help them incorporate the latest multi-method quantitative & qualitative technology into their own R & D units/activities

- development/maintenance of computerized personnel & student data bases

- Providing *separate funding*, as a distinct line item in projected operating budgets, *for R & D unit* (as separate & distinct from funds allocated to increased teacher salaries, etc.)

- Mandating *ongoing review of other related state & national studies*, in order to "keep current" as to latest developments by others implementing teacher-incentive programs

PROFESSIONAL INPUT (OWNERSHIP)

* In order for districts to develop a highly effective and efficient operation, all professional interests in the district must be knowledgeable about the essential elements which impact student achievement and included in supporting their improvement. Teachers must be centrally involved in the development, implementation and continuing evaluation of all programs which affect them (i.e., the teacher evaluation system) and the instructional program (i.e., establishment of the curriculum and objectives and student assessment programs).

  - *Requiring majority approval of program participation* & continuation of participation by confidential ballot

  - *Expanding teacher role beyond that of being merely "consultant," into meaningful, periodic & direct input* into all aspects of program implementation/refinement (e.g., the leadership, student achievement & evaluation system tasks discussed in previous sections)

  - Capitalizing on the intrinsic satisfaction unanimously perceived by teacher & administrator input into such activities (*"people help support that which they help create"*)

PROGRAM DESIGNS & STRUCTURES

* It is necessary to design and structure a total school organization so that an overall operational pattern is established which is focused on teacher development and student learning. School organizations require a long-range plan which provides for assessment, restructuring and redeployment of resources to meet desired educational goals and to demonstrate accountability for the public trust.

  - Continuing to require applicant-districts to *develop & submit well-documented proposed program plans* which validly reflect local conditions relevant to program implementation, as a prerequisite for participation

  - *Building in graduated & flexible time-lines* corresponding to improvements in readiness factors and qualification for "higher-tier" program participation

  - Requiring *evaluation & review by objective "outside, 3rd-party" agency* which can help ensure that locally developed program designs & structures are free of undue special-interest influence

  - Providing *explicit & ongoing focus on accountability & documentation of student achievement* as the focal point of such program designs & structures

  - *Encouragement of innovation* in meeting local needs & conditions, as discussed earlier

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORT)

* To become an effective school system, the local governing board needs to understand the essential elements of its school organization, how these factors positively impact student learning, and how to be most supportive in meeting educational goals. Boards which play control politics, and are under the undue influence of special interests, are extremely destructive to the development of a healthy organization and its focus on the proper purpose for existence.

  - Recognizing that *the school board has been unanimously shown to be a critical factor determining the ultimate success or failure of external teacher-incentive programs,* according to five years of research results on the Career Ladder pilot-test in Arizona

  - Therefore, *providing specially targeted inservice & other information to school boards* concerning such programs prior to their actual implementation

- Mandating *assessment of governing board's state of information/accurate knowledge by "objective 3rd-party" outside agencies*, with respect to level of understanding & support of Career Ladder concepts and to determine if additional inservice/information provision is necessary

- *Seeking & incorporating school board members' input* relative to such key implementation issues as developing equitable evaluation systems

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, COMMUNICATION & MORALE

* **Factors such as interpersonal communication, organizational climate and psychological environment are key to the successful operation of any essential interrelated component within school systems. Administrators, teachers, support staff and students must have a cooperative and supportive environment in order to reach individual potentials which, in turn, result in the most effective performance outcomes.**

  - Ongoing *monitoring of the specific effects of all aspects of program implementation on the existing interpersonal climate* (e.g., any jealousies, rivalries or power struggles which may occur with respect to any particular rule or regulation)

  - *Working actively to improve any/all currently dysfunctional aspects of interpersonal organizational structure* by capitalizing on the intrinsic motivators referred to earlier (e.g., recognizing the increased satisfactions & cooperation with peers resulting from a "team approach" to development of an evaluation process)

  - Understanding the *importance of "healthy & functional top-down & bottom-up channels of communication,"* by *provision of timely, relevant & accurate information* concerning all aspects of program implementation, so that partipants can experience a "sense of listening, & being listened to")

  - Periodic *reporting of local research activities & results to "overseeing" bodies* such as legislature & steering committees

ASSESSMENT OF READINESS LEVELS FOR REFORM, POSITIVE CHANGE, & IMPROVEMENT

* **The objectives of reform, positive change and improvement in education do not happen without full knowledge and commitment about what is to be accomplished and how to direct and mobilize resources to achieve success. Total school systems must be *ready* to carry out the**

goals of teacher development and student achievement efficiently and effectively. This readiness can only be achieved through *accurate assessment and profiling of interrelated organizational components* and development and implementation of a *long-range and systematic evaluation and improvement plan* for the total system and its relevant functioning elements.

Change & Improvement (Long-Range Plans)

- Ensuring overall focus on long-range student achievement & related teacher accountability by *acquiring the latest multi-method technology for assessing learning trends*

- Similarly, *incorporating the latest procedures for teacher skills development* into instruction & practice

- *Monitoring the impact of long-range program plans on all aspects of the overall organizational structure, & initiating corrective actions* as required for any/all support/focus factors needing remediation

- Maintaining *ongoing functional channels of communication with all affected parties*, such as administrators, school board members, parents & legislators

District Readiness Level (Assessment)

- *Applying the multi-method "profiling" technological procedure to assess the current "level of operational health" of each organizational support & focus factor*, as a necessary pre-condition of program participation & continuation

- Adopting a *"several-tiered" level of program participation based upon current overall readiness level* to benefit from such a program, as assessed by results of this "profiling" procedure

- *Ongoing evaluation/monitoring of program impact on the current level of each organizational component*, & initiating timely corrective action to improve those individual components needing such remediation

Support of Outside Forces

Impacting Teacher Development & Student Achievement

> **Outside forces impacting school organizations, such as legislation, policy guidelines, governing boards, universities and business and industry, must understand the needs and goals of school systems. In addition, they may need to restructure operations and redeploy resources to meet specific needs of the total interrelated components of school district systems.**

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

- Recognizing the *informational & interpersonal benefits* of a regular means of interaction with others who are also struggling with similar program implementation
- Maintaining *independence of such professional networks* from influence/functioning of formal governing boards
- Requiring all funded Career Ladder districts to *participate periodically in such professional networks*, as a condition for receipt of program funding

STATE FINANCE & FUNDING (SALARY SCHEDULE)

- Ensuring *adequate funding* being available *for* such *necessary "start-up" activities* as establishment of equitable evaluation system & local district research & development support activities, as opposed to allocating entire designated sums for increased teacher salaries
- Continuing to monitor & ensure a truly *"performance-based" approach to salary allocation*
- Maintaining participants' expressed desire for the separateness of Career Ladders compensation from the traditional salary schedule in formulating projected funding budgets
- Sincere concern for fulfilling responsibility of *"financial stewardship"* (e.g., demonstrating tangible benefits, with respect to increased student achievement & teacher accountability, in exchange for public dollars received)

STATE GOVERNING BOARD (ACCOUNTABILITY/IMPLEMENTATION)

- Formulation of policy *guidelines to encourage Career Ladder districts to adopt the comprehensive Arizona Department of Education (ADE) curriculum*

- Encouragement of these districts to *assist ADE in ongoing validation, monitoring & necessary revision(s)* of assessment plans

LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES

- Maintaining *proper long-range focus* on *improved student achievement in intellectual, social & emotional areas*, as well as *increased teacher accountability* for such achievement

- Maintaining the *proper balance of sufficient structure/ detail*, along with *sufficient recognition of local diversity* which may necessitate some flexibility in the legislative guidelines

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES, PROGRAM EVALUATION & IMPROVEMENT

- Provision of *mechanisms for ongoing monitoring* of all possible local factors which may impact successful program implementation (e.g., ideally, through a local R & D unit within the district)

- Provision of *timely, relevant & accurate information* to internal (administrators) & external (legislators, school-board members, & parents) decision makers & affected parties concerning the current state of program implementation

- Applying aforementioned *"profiling" procedure* to detect areas needing improvement in a timely manner

- Initiating *prompt corrective action as necessary* for organizational support & focus factors which are currently below par, in order to ensure maximal program success